

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 HA-05 SSO-00 INRE-00 NSCE-00
ICAE-00 EUR-12 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 HEW-06
INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 CA-01 SCS-06 EB-08 /080 W
-----072526 031140Z /10

O 031119Z AUG 78

FM USMISSION GENEVA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2837
INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY
SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
JCS WASHDC PRIORITY
CSAF WASHDC PRIORITY
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

UNCLAS GENEVA 11893

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF, UNHCR, AO, CG

SUBJECT: UNHCR REQUEST FOR AIRLIFT OF BLANKETS TO ZAIRE

1. MISSION HAS JUST RECEIVED REQUEST FROM UNHCR (VON ARNIM)
FOR U.S. ASSISTANCE IN AIRLIFTING URGENTLY APPROXIMATELY
30,000 BLANKETS FROM GERMANY TO KINSHASA.

2. VON ARNIM EXPLAINED THAT UNHCR HAS RECEIVED GIFT PLEDGE
FOR 30,000 OR MORE BLANKETS (TO CONSTITUTE A PLANE LOAD)
FROM CARITAS GERMANY IN FREIBURG. THESE ARE INTENDED FOR
THE APPROXIMATELY 60,000 ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN BAS-ZAIRE
PROVINCE, WHOSE NUMBERS ARE STILL INCREASING, ACCORDING
TO VON ARNIM, AND MANY OF WHOM ARE "DESTITUTE" AND IN A
"PITIABLE" CONDITION. HE STATED THAT CARITAS DOES NOT HAVE
FUNDS FOR THE AIRLIFT OF THESE BLANKETS TO ZAIRE, WHOSE
COST IS ESTIMATED BETWEEN \$50,000 AND \$60,000 BY COMMERCIAL
AIR FREIGHT. WEIGHT OF THE SHIPMENT, BASED ON A TOTAL OF
30,000 UNITS IS 36 TONS. VON ARNIM'S REQUEST WAS DIRECTED

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TOWARD ANY U.S. MILITARY AIRLIFT SPACE THAT MIGHT BE
AVAILABLE, WHETHER FOR THE TOTAL SHIPMENT OR A PORTION
THEREOF, BETWEEN GERMANY AND KINSHASA. HE STATED THAT
CARITAS COULD DEPOSIT THE BLANKETS AT ANY POINT IN GERMANY
FOR PICKUP BY USAF.

3. VON ARNIM SAID THAT THE MATTER WAS "RATHER URGENT" IN

VIEW OF THE POOR CONDITION OF THE REFUGEES AND THE ONSET OF THE COLD AND RAINY SEASON IN THAT AREA. HE SAID THAT UNHCR HAD ALREADY DISTRIBUTED 29,000 BLANKETS IN THE AREA, WHICH HAD BEEN CONTRIBUTED BY THE U.K., OXFAM, AND OTHER UNSPECIFIED AGENCIES AND GOVERNMENTS. HE MADE POINT OF EMPHASIZING THAT UNHCR HAD IN PLACE A HIGHLY EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF DISTRIBUTING THE BLANKETS UPON ARRIVAL IN KINSHASA THROUGH THREE SWISS VOLUNTEERS FUNDED BY THE SWISS GOVERNMENT AND A CATHOLIC MISSIONARY NETWORK IN THE AREA, WHICH WOULD ASSURE THAT ALL THE BLANKETS WERE DELIVERED TO THE INTENDED RECIPIENTS (THIS IS INTERPRETED AS AN ALLUSION TO DEFICIENT INTERNAL DELIVERY SYSTEMS IN ZAIRE IN THE PAST).

4. COMMENT: MISSION FEELS THAT THIS IS A WORTHY REQUEST WHICH WE SHOULD RESPOND TO POSITIVELY IF AT ALL POSSIBLE. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, WE HAVE OVER A LONG PERIOD OF TIME EMPHASIZED TO UNHCR THE PLIGHT OF ANGOLAN REFUGEES IN ZAIRE. ASSUMING VON ARNIM'S DESCRIPTION IS ACCURATE, THE STATE OF THIS LARGE GROUP OF REFUGEES IS ESPECIALLY DISTRESSING AND WORTHY OF SYMPATHETIC ATTENTION. THEREFORE, IF WE CAN DO SO, IT WOULD SEEM TO MISSION THAT WE SHOULD COOPERATE IN THIS ALREADY INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN EFFORT. END COMMENT.

5. EMBASSY KINSHASA MAY WISH TO OFFER ITS COMMENTS WITH UNCLASSIFIED

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REGARD TO MERITS OF THIS APPEAL.

6. DEPARTMENT'S VIEWS REQUESTED ASAP. VANDEN HEUVEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY AIRLIFTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 03 aug 1978
Decapton Date: 01 jan 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978GENEVA11893
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780318-0098
Format: TEL
From: GENEVA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197808104/aaaadivi.tel
Line Count: 97
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 871e0358-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1551437
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNHCR REQUEST FOR AIRLIFT OF BLANKETS TO ZAIRE
TAGS: SREF, AO, CG, US, UNHCR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/871e0358-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014